

# Accreditation Report

<b>School:</b> Beaconsfield High School	<b>Date of Audit:</b> 26 <sup>th</sup> June 2018	<b>Assessor:</b> Heather Clements Elaine Ricks
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## Overview:

In its prospectus, Beaconsfield High School states the aim to have “*talented students and develop them into rounded, successful and remarkable young adults in a modern, diverse, inclusive and dynamic school, a centre of excellence in and out of the classroom, and a happy community*” and this was reflected in everything we saw on the audit day.

The principle of respect – for yourself, for others, for the environment and, of course, for learning was seen in practice and underpinned by the “Getting Life Ready” (GLR) culture that the school has been developing.

As well as a strong academic focus, there is an emphasis on creativity and wider learning with many subjects offering clubs and activities run by the Sixth Form subject prefects including Book Club, Coding Club and Ancient Greek Club. Career-focused societies like Modern United Nations and MedSoc, are also led by senior prefects to open students’ minds to what their futures could hold.

Standards of attainment and progress are excellent, but the school continues to strive for even further improvements through forensic analysis of the needs of individuals and providing appropriate support and intervention to ensure every girl achieves their potential.

The school seeks to develop the skills needed to thrive in the world of university and work. They provide tailored careers advice and a range of opportunities such as career speed dating, lectures by industry experts, Higher Education Fairs, apprenticeship talks and professional interviews. Those who wish to apply to Oxbridge colleges are fully supported with notable success with 8 acceptances for 2017/18. Typically 75% of students achieve their first-choice university, vocational course, route to work or a creative profession. The school also works with a range of businesses and organisations, including Hitachi and Bosch, to better the school environment and opportunities for students.

Student voice is a key element of the school’s culture and was instrumental in the development of the GLR initiative. The School Council, Sixth Form Working Party and the Quality Learning Team also regularly work alongside staff to consider ways to improve quality of provision and experiences for students.

*“The school gives us the opportunity to make a difference by involving us in important decisions and enabling us to voice our thoughts through groups, such as the school’s Working Party and the Student Council.”*

Sophie, Year 13 (from the school’s prospectus)

## Summary of Exceptional Practice:

### Governance

Governors are knowledgeable and reflective, having a range of skills and expertise. They are conscious that

in the past they may have assumed that the school's successful outcomes meant that the school was doing well, but now seek to probe and question effectively and draw on external perspectives in order to hold the senior leaders to account. This has resulted in them being able to work effectively with the new head teacher to strengthen the senior leadership team, identify weaknesses and prioritise the areas for development to ensure that weaknesses, in teaching and learning in particular, were addressed. They are now highly proactive in monitoring the work of the school and are a frequent active presence in the school - giving effective support and challenge to the SLT.

### **Leadership**

After a period of significant turbulence in the school's leadership, the current head teacher is held in high regard by staff who value her empathetic leadership style and capacity to lead by example. They are confident in the head teacher's willingness to take difficult decisions when issues arise. She is very ably supported by a proactive senior leadership team and increasingly effective middle leadership which ensures that change is embedded and sustained. The Spiritual Moral Social and Cultural development of students is a strong and significant component in developing well rounded young people within and beyond the school. In many subjects, real life examples and applications permeate discussions. The School Improvement Plan seeks to value the current strengths, improve and embed the developing areas and be measured in the scope of new innovation. There is also an awareness of the impact on students' and staff work load. The plan has clear and measurable milestones to enable leaders to monitor progress effectively and make adjustments to the plan if needed.

### **Staff**

The staff are very positive about the direction of travel and the culture and climate of the school and feel that the changes have been beneficial to the students and supportive of teachers. The teachers have excellent subject knowledge and demonstrate a real pleasure in and passion for sharing their knowledge with the students. They know the students very well and go the extra mile to support them. Staff are increasingly confident in their capacity to manage change and are looking to embed practice within their departments.

Staff have fully embraced GLR as they view the approach as being relevant and therefore engaging to students. They comment that this has resulted in a culture change with students becoming more resilient, willing to ask questions, show uncertainty and seek help if needed. They believe that the combined pastoral and academic approach has real potential to succeed and would like to see it sustained and have longevity.

"GLR helps students see that life is not just about exams. They are engaged with it because they identify with it and see it as relevant."

They value the increased opportunities for internal professional development and departmental time to develop their practice and be deployed to use their expertise in working with other schools.

### **Parents**

Parents are universally positive about all that the school has to offer their daughters. They not only value the school's very high aspirations but feel that the school offers much more than academic opportunities and provides a rounded education. They view the school's focus on the whole child and life skills as a key factor in creating a general sense of well-being and confidence. *"Girls are taking on the messages of GLR but will only really appreciate this when they move on to the next stage in their lives and realise that they have the*

*emotional maturity and strategies to cope with change and grasp opportunities.”*

They are impressed by how well the staff know the students as individuals and the way they are able to give very specific and tailored feedback at parents’ evenings. They believe that staff encourage students to get out of their comfort zone and try different things.

They hold the head teacher in high regard and believe that the changes she has made, including improvements to the curriculum, teaching and learning and the school’s facilities have had a real impact on students’ learning and attitudes to school.

*“The head teacher is a force of nature bringing a fresh perspective to the school, talent spotting to get excellent staff and increasingly looking outward to work with other schools.”*

They have noted improvements in the way the school communicates with them and the range of social media used to celebrate achievements.

*“You sometimes get the results of a match before the girls have got home.”*

They believe that the ability to directly email teachers when they have concerns or queries is reassuring and enables concerns to be resolved before they become an issue. They also appreciate the very prompt way in which teachers respond to email communications.

### **Students**

The students are a credit to the school. They thrive in the supportive environment, challenge themselves and each other, are appropriately respectful to adults and strive to achieve the best possible outcomes. The influence of the school on pupil behaviour is evident in the way in which students mature through the school with increasing self-discipline and self-assurance.

Students value and actively engage in a range of home learning activities including research, preparation for future lessons or practicing and consolidating classroom learning. They value when there are strong links between home learning and follow up discussions in lessons.

Students believe that school treats them as individuals – it cares about them and seeks to help them to develop into resilient, rounded individuals. They feel that their views are taken into account, for example in subject surveys where teachers then take action linked to the findings of the surveys. They highly value the implementation of the GLR scheme and see it as helping them to develop a growth mind set. They are increasingly aware of the need to apply the GLR skills to their learning and are able to fully articulate how they are encouraged to do this in lessons.

*“You can always ask a question and it’s OK if you get it wrong” (KS3 student).*

*“We are not resilient all the time as we are not robots, but GLR helps you cope and have a growth mindset” (KS4 student).*

Student leadership posts have been designed with specific responsibilities, decision making powers and levels of accountability. This means that student decisions can impact on the school community. Students have to apply for student leadership positions, reflecting the importance given to the roles.

*“You need to be responsible, independent and apply what you have learned” (KS5 student).*

Extra-curricular experiences give students confidence and a wide range of opportunities for individual skills

and talents to emerge and develop.

*“Extra-curricular activities have really boosted my confidence” (KS3 student).*

*“There are opportunities for everyone. I coach year 7 football and also play rugby and cricket” (KS5 student).*

### **Teaching and learning**

Teaching and learning are highly effective with a positive learning environment in all lessons observed where staff and students work together with a sense of shared endeavour and a desire to improve.

Teachers are passionate about their subjects and this inspires students to learn. *“They spark a passion in us and make us excited to learn about that subject” (KS4 student).*

Lessons have pace and teacher talk is minimised. Teachers use a wide range of strategies and approaches so learning is *“never boring”* and *“you never know what you are going to learn next”*. Students believe that teachers seek to make learning fun.

Students are confident and assured. There is a feeling of trust which enables them to take risks, speculate and hypothesise. Throughout the school there is outstanding collaborative and independent learning where students spontaneously support each other but can also apply themselves to individual tasks.

Teachers’ strong subject knowledge leads to high levels of challenge in lessons and a creative approach to designing lessons. Teachers give very good verbal feedback throughout lessons which moves learning forward effectively.

There are outstanding learning opportunities in the Sixth Form where students learn from and with each other, showing a willingness to take their learning in different directions. They benefit from the capacity of their teachers to respond to unexpected progress or new thinking because of their excellent subject knowledge.

### **Case study:**

#### Getting Life Ready

The school has developed a learning code called ‘Getting Life Ready’ which represents the school’s core purpose and takes a holistic approach to students’ learning, well-being and resilience to enable students to reach their full potential.

The process by which the GLR poster was researched, created and developed by students, who sought staff views, has led to a learning code which all stakeholders can understand and commit to. Teachers had training and resources to enable them to teach and sign post GLR skills within lessons and quality assurance has been focussed on evaluating its implementation and impact.

Evidence to date shows that critical thinking, collaborative working, reflection and resourcefulness are now commonplace in lessons. Students are able to discuss the GLR skills in operation in lessons and their metacognition is developing.

One unexpected outcome was a better understanding by staff of the capabilities of the student leaders and their appetite for leading on significant whole school change. As a result, the school remodelled its sixth form student leadership team so that it shadows the SLT and increased the expectations and opportunities for students to have an impact on shaping the school and developing their leadership skills.

### Next steps

- Ensure that students fully understand the fundamental purpose of GLR to improve their life-long learning as well as the social and emotional well-being.
- Ensure that there are clear measurable milestones for years 2 and 3 of the project with an increasing focus on learning outcomes.
- Use parental seminars and communication to ensure that GLR becomes a code for their personal life and not just for school, future study or employment.

### Summary of potential areas for further development:

- Ensure that in the focus on well-being, there is no loss of focus on academic achievement in the minds of students.
- Embed the dialogue about learning amongst all staff by creating even more cross departmental learning opportunities, including systematic sharing of feedback from external CPD.
- Continue supporting local primary schools to improve access opportunities for able disadvantaged students. Consider targeted mentoring of these students in years 4 and 5 by BHS students.
- Ensure parents are fully aware when staff have provided individual personal and social support to students to reassure and relieve their anxiety. Ensure this is communicated to parents in a timely and sensitive way.
- In the context of managing a significant volume of school, parental and governor communication, ensure that there is clarity about what the key pieces of information are which need to be shared, for all stakeholders.
- Continue to work with those students at risk of lower GCSE or A level grades in a preventative way at the point where performance begins to dip.
- Continue the excellent support of middle leaders in enabling teachers to be confident in their ability to use assessment information and performance data to inform lesson planning and identify students who may be falling behind.

### Learning and Teaching

#### Within the context of good and outstanding teaching practice could be improved further by:

- Ensuring all new staff and colleagues continue to ensure the consistency of developmental assessment, marking and feedback so that it progresses student learning.
- Ensuring students continue to develop the skills to self and peer marking effectively so that they feel even more able to make improvements and increasingly take responsibility for their own learning.
- Developing teachers' further use of higher order questions and ensure they continue to probe to deepen learning, giving time and space for extended responses from students.
- Creating more planned opportunities for students to ask higher order questions.
- Ensuring in all lessons that learning is fully contextualised into a wider body of knowledge so that students make links with prior learning, other subjects and real-life scenarios.

Signed:

Lead Assessor: Heather Clements

<i>Heather Clements</i>	<b>Second Assessor Elaine Ricks-Neal</b> <b>Date: June 26<sup>th</sup> 2018</b>
<b>Date for Reaccreditation: June 2022</b>	